

REMARKS

By this Amendment After Final, Applicants propose canceling claims 19 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amending claim 20. No new matter has been added.

In the Final Office Action dated May 2, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 19 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sillmon (U.S. Patent No. 6,325,390); allowed claims 1-18 and indicated that claims 20-22 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the subject matter recited in the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowed claims and allowable subject matter. Applicants have proposed canceling claims 19 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby obviating the rejection of claims 19 and 23. Applicants have also proposed amending claim 20 to incorporate the subject matter recited in claim 19 (the base claim).

Because Applicants have incorporated all of the subject matter of claim 19 into claim 20, claim 20 should be allowable at least by virtue of the Examiner's May 2, 2003, indication that claim 20 would be allowable if rewritten to include the subject matter of the base claim (claim 19). For at least the reasons set forth above, claim 20, if amended as proposed, should be allowable. Dependent claims 21 and 22 depend from claim 20. Consequently, those dependent claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 20 is allowable.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-18 and 20-22 in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments to claim 20

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do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and the relationships claimed were earlier claimed. Therefore, this Amendment After Final should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the Examiner's Final Office Action presented new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that entering this Amendment After Final would allow Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that entry of the Amendment After Final would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment After Final, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation might advance prosecution, the Examiner is cordially invited to call Applicants' representative at 571-203-2739.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Final Office Action contains numerous assertions relating to the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether those

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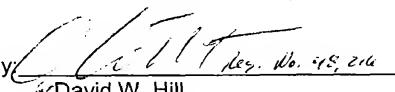
assertions are addressed specifically herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to them.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 30, 2003

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